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Speeches Honoring Abraham Lincoln

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THE LAST BEST HOPE OF EARTH

An Address Delivered Before The
Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia
in The Library of Congress

by
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This is the first time I have ever had the courage to say anything in public about Abraham Lincoln. The very real distress my acceptance of this invitation has caused me makes it likely that this will also be my Farewell Address about him.

If one merely restates or reshapes that which has already been well said about him by others, it were far better that the others should speak for themselves--or have that well read which has been well written about him. So many men of ability, some of whom are in this room--Roy Basler, Lloyd Dunlap, David C. Mearns, C. Percy Powell, Ralph Newman and your president, Fred Schwengel, to name but six--have said so much about Mr. Lincoln and said it so well that a man of conscience must hesitate between poaching on their preserves or venturing to shoot upon his own and thus risk bringing down lesser game or none at all.

Fully conscious of this though I was, the invitation came from one for whom I have such affection and respect that I was impelled to undertake that which I should not. So tonight I feel as though I had in a moment of regrettable audacity agreed to duplicate the feat of Blondin and cross Niagara on a tight-rope bearing Mr. Lincoln on my back. Disturbed though I am for my own safety, I am more worried about the well being of my passenger. After all his agreement to participate in this trick was neither requested nor secured.

Here and now I find myself on the brink, and between me and the other bank stretches a tightrope of some twenty-odd minutes which I must cross. For Blondin's pole I have this script. With it I hope to avoid the gulf of unconscious plagiarism on the one side and the abyss of a complete loss of memory on the other.

Instead of the address that I will deliver tonight, I should have preferred to talk about collecting Lincolniana and to speak, with such modesty as a collector may summon up, about some rarities I have acquired recently, or to have told you that we might now fill in a few gaps in the great Lincoln Day by Day Books as a result of some meager gleanings of my own research.

However, I was impelled to choose a more sober subject tonight because some of the things that are troubling the world are diametrically opposed to the philosophy of Abraham Lincoln as I understand it.

He would have been outraged by the shocking outbreak of anti-Semitism and its attendant desecration of houses of worship and violations of the resting places of the dead; the continuing depressed status of millions of our fellow citizens who are Negroes in all of the 50 states and the raising of religious issues in politics. These outward indications of intolerance are the ingredients of a veritable hell brew that we must not let reach a point of critical mass. If we in the United States and all good men everywhere will only adopt the 52-word plan I shall propose tonight, these midnight terrors will vanish.

Too many, and I fear myself among them, presumed in the beginning that Hitler, that vicious little demon, and his dwarfish crew were but the outward indications of a mild case of German athlete's foot. Too late we found them to be leprous and infectious. The world still bears the scars of their dreadful affliction. Whether the current acts of anti-racism that trouble me are the sporadic work of delinquents, juvenile or adult, or of a cunning centrally directed cell of vandals, is beside the point. We cannot afford to consider such outbreaks as only night-riding nits of know-nothingism that may be combed out at will from the beard of Uncle Sam. From past history we know they could be the forerunners of Armageddon.

We and our allies are involved in a titanic struggle. It is of such a dimension and complexity as to baffle career diplomats and to defy complete understanding by the layman. It is, in essence, a contest of ideas waged between Communism and Democracy, with the announced ultimate prize the entire human race.

It is inevitable that I am led back to Lincoln's House Divided Speech, as so many have been before me, and to wonder whether a world so divided can continue to live half slave and half free. It is the contention of the free world that the world will not fall, that it will not become entirely Communistic and that freedom will prevail.

In this battle for sheer survival, the ideas of Abraham Lincoln and the power that has been generated by what he was, what he accomplished and what he stood for are, in my opinion, among the most potent weapons that the free world can wield. Since so many of the globe's inhabitants being fought for by these mighty forces are have-nots, the figure of Abraham Lincoln gains added strength because of his own insignificant beginnings, and his life-long dedication to the dignity of man. Wherever one looks, whether at home or abroad, there are many examples of his imprint today, after all these years, upon men and women of all countries and in all walks of life.

In 1958 World Brotherhood conducted an international essay contest, "What World Brotherhood Means to Me." There were four winners -- a young Mexican woman,

a Burmese housewife, a captain in the Danish army and a police corporal from Ghana. The young people were brought to the United States to receive their awards. In Washington, in February, they were taken to the Lincoln Memorial. The Ghanaian, 23 year old Assibi Abudu of Accra, walked up the steps and, turning his back on the text of the Gettysburg Address, recited it from memory, flawlessly, and with evident emotion.

My own racial and national heritage is such that I believe, with Abraham Lincoln, that this Union of States which he fought to maintain and to restore, is indeed "the last best hope of earth." Because of his race and his nationality, Mr. Abudu may very well look back across these many intervening years and think of Mr. Lincoln as the first great hope of Ghana. He will remember that the thrust of the Message to the Congress of December '62 was directed at emancipation for the negro -- graduated emancipation, it is true, and with a final deadline 37 years off in 1900 -- but Freedom nevertheless. In all logic this young man from Ghana and his fellow-countrymen may attribute the recent creation of their own new nation in considerable part to the extinction of slavery here. It is idle to speculate as to the details of World Freedom had the Civil War ended differently or had someone other than Lincoln been president or had he not been a man of such adamant conviction and utter patience. But none, I think, will deny that the course of freedom would have been retarded had its flame been snuffed out here and that today we would have a different and less favorable national image abroad. How long freedom would have been delayed and the exact difference in the face our nation shows the world I must leave to those qualified in the nuance and complexities of historical extrapolation.

But, for myself, I am sure that in the balances of men's minds -- whether they be men of Ghana and black, or men of India and brown, or men of China and, as they say, yellow, or whether pigmented like ourselves and thus in a world sense in

the minority -- the existence in our past of Abraham Lincoln and the body of people who supported him weighs in those balances more heavily in our national interest than we can realize.

It would be wrong of me to attempt further development of such a point beyond the obvious. Men like Gerald McMurtry, Paul Angle, Justin Turner, all Lincoln scholars of note, have made recent journeys abroad and can and will, I am sure, speak more authoritatively in this regard. But so that you might not think that I have emptily conjured up this concept of Mr. Lincoln as a substantial bulwark of our national defense, I asked for some telegrams from the travelers:

Gerald McMurtry -- The people of southeastern Asia know Abraham Lincoln because of his Gettysburg Address. The "Government 'of', 'by', and 'for the people'" is a ringing challenge to them today. Asia still looks to America as "the last best hope of earth," and Lincoln is the most salable product any nation has to offer in the great world struggle to capture the minds of men.

Paul M. Angle -- The democratic government which Japan now enjoys is not deeply rooted in the nation's tradition. Many Japanese recognize the need to know more about democracy, and believe that they can best meet this need through the study of Lincoln's life. Thus his example is a significant force in the new Japan.

Justin G. Turner -- Foreign travel enables one to appreciate the world influence of Lincoln. To the illiterate and downtrodden masses of North Africa, Lincoln represents a hope for a better future. In Israel, where Lincoln's ideals are cherished, lectures will be presented by American scholars and historians. In England, reverence for Lincoln has been a factor in adding American History courses to the college curriculum. Lincoln continues to increase in world

stature as a symbol of freedom to those peoples whose economic and educational standards must be improved if we are to enjoy peace and security.

I should perhaps tell you that Mr. Abudu is now a student at Hampton Institute. After I had written about him that which I have read to you tonight, I had some qualms in ascribing to him those thoughts and convictions. I will also admit to a certain uneasiness because of the impulses and assumptions I have attached to Mr. Lincoln tonight. I can only say that I have arrived at these after serious and careful deliberation and that on sober reflection they do not outrage any facts I know about him. I could not ask Mr. Lincoln if I had dealt fairly with him. But I could and did telephone to Mr. Abudu. I was pleased to learn that I had not strayed too far from his opinions about Lincoln. Further, I was delighted to have him tell me that although there was no formal instruction in Ghana about the specific contribution of Lincoln to their nationality, it was, as he phrased it, nevertheless a more or less universal concept there.

If without academic direction this is true in Ghana, I think I take not too great a leap to assume that elsewhere in the world the good that Lincoln did lives on and that he thus serves us still.

He served us well on the 12th of February of last year when dignitaries from many nations went to Springfield, Illinois, to attend the dinner given by the Illinois Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission. I would like to read a telegram from Clyde Walton, Illinois State Historian:

Twenty-one foreign countries including ten ambassadors represented at February 12 Lincoln Sesquicentennial Dinner at Springfield. Principal speaker Mayor Willy Brandt of West Berlin. Other speakers, Ambassadors Sir Harold Caccia, Great Britain; Herve Alphand, France; Ernest Bonhomme, Haiti. And by the way, representatives of 67 nations, including Iron Curtain countries, were on the floor of the House at the Joint Session of Congress February 11 when Mr. Sandburg delivered his notable address.

Although no Iron Curtain nation was represented at the Springfield dinner, when Mr. Khrushchev came to the United States, he paid his tribute to Abraham Lincoln, and further Soviet interest is apparent in the publication of Lincoln's speeches in Russian.

Most of us remember the dramatic confrontation of Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial that was suggested to the White House by Congressman Schwengel and which was recorded by Life Magazine in an unforgettable photograph. Who of us can evaluate, fully, the effect that long look of consideration had upon the mind of the chief of state of a great nation with a polarity the reverse of ours, with objectives antagonistic to ours and whose physical challenge to our continued existence absorbs more than half of our national budget and occupies not only our waking moments but those of the world at large?

He stared at the heroic statue without speaking for some time. He did not or would not hear the photographers who pleaded with him to turn around, according to eye-witness reports. Then he asked for translations of the graven utterances around him. It is unavoidable to presume that some of the personal greatness of Lincoln and his words and deeds were there and then added to the sum total of the image of this country that Khrushchev was building for himself.

Elsewhere our visitor saw examples of our enormous physical strength and our great economic well-being. At the Memorial he saw majestic evidence of our recognition of the emotional and spiritual qualities of the man who gave freedom a new birth and who pleaded in the closing days of a great domestic war not only for a just and lasting peace among ourselves, but with all nations.

It would be as abhorrent to me, as it would be to you, to suggest that Lincoln foresaw these troubled times in any mystic sense of prescience. But I will propose to you that had he, by any means, had such foresight he could not have conducted the affairs of his office more accurately, nor spoken more purposefully

for our present good. Again and again he related, with brilliance, our domestic problems to the international scene. Time after time he directed our foreign relations, or exerted a restraining influence on others involved in them, in such a way as to earn our plaudits for his wisdom and foresight.

Consider the full closing paragraph of his message to the Congress in 1862. All too many remember it only for the literary excellence or emotional content of a few phrases:

"Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it."

This audience needs no assurance that he did not invoke the world in the manner of the head of a household ashamedly warning that the neighbors would hear of the family quarrel. Rather, I think, as I assume you do, he said "world" for a far more noble purpose. He knew that in his household was a plague of a most virulent kind and that its germs were blowing abroad. He believed that if the plague could be contained, curbed and eventually cured at home, then the plague of slavery, throughout the world, in all its manifestations -- whether the bondage of men's bodies or their minds -- would be replaced by Freedom.

Certainly the rest of the paragraph needs no further gloss of mine to prove that he spoke not only for that day and to a narrow and insular purpose, but for all men, everywhere to hear, and for all time to come.

"We -- even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free -- honorable

alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose the last best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just -- a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless."

I need do no more than remind you that Lincoln's concern with liberty and the world as a whole and of our place in it was of long standing. You may trace it through much of his life. In the fifth debate with Douglas at Galesburg, he quotes Henry Clay to the effect that "Those who would repress all tendencies to liberty...must blot out the moral lights around us--they must penetrate the human soul and eradicate the light of reason and the love of liberty." In the Gettysburg Address he again casts his vision beyond the battlefield, past our continental limits to the farthest shores -- it was the world, he thought, that would not remember. In considering his unwavering determination to accomplish his ends and the incredible patience and courage he displayed, I have sometimes thought that his awareness of the importance to mankind as a whole of what he was about might have been an unknown and secret emotional anchor to the windward.

While I do not mean to suggest that patriotism alone would not have sustained him, it is, I believe, admissible to think that the more universal view I ascribe to him was in some ways, at least, an added buttress to his adversities. That he did not delineate a definitive belief in the Brotherhood and Parliament of Man is understandable when we consider the strong nationalistic currents that were flowing then. Indeed they still flow, and strongly. But in our generation most of us have been forced to accept the concept of one world as a concomitant to the one common fate that threatens its extinction. Most of us are really concerned now, and not wholly for selfish reasons, with the problems and the well being of men, women and children everywhere. Some of our attitude, if not of the world as a whole,

must be traced to Lincoln's general benevolence -- for just as a man is, in great degree, the sum total of his progenitors, so a people is molded by its past.

In these difficult times when, as Omar said, a hair perhaps divides the false and true and a split second may decide the fate of mankind, this all-pervading aura of Abraham Lincoln may hold, or may yet tip, the scales in our favor.

Many of us keep casting constant trial balances in regard to the Russians. We give them debit marks for the things they do that displease us or frighten us, but automatically add credit marks for the things about them that we look upon with favor. Instinctively I find myself trying to balance Mr. Khrushchev's barks and scowls and threats with memories of Russian music that I have heard and loved; I shudder at the cruelty of his slave labor and automatically try to redress with memories of the plays of Andryev or Chekhov. I think I know the truth about Communism and I take it to be a real threat to all that I hold dear. The reason I think I know the truth about it is that I live in a free country and I have a mind as free as I myself wish it to be. Newspapers, radio, television, books, magazines, the reports of the Secretary of State and other Cabinet officers, the Presidential press conference, and the give and take of Congressional debate make it possible for me to know the truth if I choose to read and listen and inform myself -- and, from among the varying shades of opinion and emphasis available to a free man, to make up my mind for myself.

Russia is eager to export its composers, ballets and artists so that we will think better of them than their stern political visage alone would let us think. Believing, in turn, that they do not allow their people to know the full truth about us, we are equally eager that our composers and artists should go there to offset the unfavorable propaganda they give our system.

In this continuing and seemingly endless war being fought in the main so far, due to the mercy of Providence, only in the minds of men and for the domination

of the minds of men, it is my firm conviction that the living memory of Lincoln has played a powerful role.

I want to thank all those who, in the sesquicentennial year which will close on February 12, have labored so assiduously not only to memorialize Abraham Lincoln here, but to send his image abroad refreshed and revitalized by the attention his own people have given him. Only the completely chauvinistic would deny that if Lincoln were alive today, he would amplify his message of 1862 and term all nations in all continents as the last best hope of earth--if they but subscribed to one simple doctrine--perhaps the fairest ever penned--Freedom and Liberty for All.

In 1948 our American contribution toward world peace--the Marshall Plan--electrified the world. In signing it on April 3 of that year, President Truman said, "This is the answer to the challenge facing the free world." In Washington on that very same day, General Eisenhower, in praising the Marshall Plan before the Senate Armed Services Committee, said: "The United States cannot live as an island of democracy surrounded by a sea of dictatorship."

I suggest that in 1960 we announce a new American plan--The Lincoln Plan. The plan itself, in the words of Mr. Lincoln, would be that all mankind and all nations should conduct themselves "with malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right," to "strive on to finish the work we are in;...to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations."

It is my suggestion to the Congress and to the People, Yes, to use Carl Sandburg's immortal phrase, that although the money we vote and supply for the plans and projects of nations around the globe is highly meritorious and, needless to say, should be continued, the addition of The Lincoln Plan would round out the circle. Any nation of wealth can finance the Aswan Dam, but only we can export

in unlimited supply the great good will, the common sense, the dedication to his fellow man, the superb sense of justice, the quality of mercy and the universal understanding of Abraham Lincoln.

In a letter dated February 14, 1860, explaining a paragraph in the House Divided speech which had been challenged, he wrote: "That is the whole paragraph; and it puzzles me to make my meaning plainer. Look over it carefully, and conclude I meant all I said and did not mean anything I did not say, and you will have my meaning."

Lincoln was assuring his correspondents, and those of us who will hear him, that he thought before he spoke or wrote. To him his words were weapons in his battles for the Union, before and after the outbreak of the war. He thought with the exquisite precision of a great advocate.

We, the people of the United States, and our leaders and the leaders of all nations on both sides of the Curtain and all people in all countries must, to the best of our ability, think and speak with the precision of an advocate; because in Lincoln's own words again, "In times like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and in eternity... The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise--with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country." And if Lincoln were alive today, I am sure he would highly approve the addition of three more words--"and the world."

January 21, 1960

Commencement Address
Iowa Wesleyan College
May 31, 1965
by Carl Haverlin

NO MIGHTIER BULWARK

We are in the second century and a half since his first faint cry was heard in a cabin in a forest in a clearing in what had been the dark and bloody ground of Kentucky.

We are in the second century since his voice was stilled forever in a whirlwind on an April night. After four years of war the nation's soil was bloodier and darker far with tears than was ever that of his birth.

A century of remembrance has passed. It began in terrible grief at the Peterson House. It ended with a solemn and heartfelt prayer at his tomb delivered by the grandson of a slave whom Lincoln freed.

Now we have begun another hundred years of remembrance in which he will not be forgotten; during which he will continue to grow in stature and power. For, though the voice of Abraham Lincoln was stilled forever in that lilac-haunted death, his words yet cry out. They cry out from the lips of the living and shine from uncounted pages.

It has been said that the chief glories of the English-speaking people are their liberties and their literature. His words have made imperishable contributions to both and, in translation, to the liberties and literature of other lands as well.

Vachel Lindsay wrote that Abraham Lincoln walks from his Springfield tomb at midnight. I hold that he also walks by day, going in a perpetual noon, pacing the sun in a global vigil over the rights of men. Mr. Lincoln has gone abroad. He is our universal ambassador, more widely known and more deeply loved than any other American and, possibly, more than any other human being who ever lived. Leo Tolstoy, that eagle of Russian letters,

thought so. He said that of all the great heroes and statesmen of history "Lincoln was the only real giant."

As one of the great common denominators, he is a shield and a weapon in the arsenal of the democracies. But in the implacable and abrading struggle that everywhere is being waged for the minds of men, and, in some places, for their bodies, he is little used, though greatly honored. He should be used as we should use every means at our command, if we are not to lose the last best hope of earth.

Indeed, it is fitting that he should be used, for it would be in continuation of the task that he began.

It is a great over-simplification, but essentially true, to say that we are in the present crusade because of Lincoln. The line of descent is clear. Though against slavery on deep moral principles, as a jurist he accepted it as an abhorrent reality where it was constitutional, but, on the highest legal grounds he opposed its extension where it was not. On these points he was elected to the Presidency. Because of his election the war came and, with the war, Emancipation. His tragic death and the ensuing adoption of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments sharpened our moral senses and we became, in time, our brother's keeper -- wherever he might be.

Thus ended our traditional isolation behind our ocean seas. So began the chain of events that has bound us, ever since, to the defense of liberties wherever they are threatened. Because of Lincoln we are committed, irrevocably, to the use of our resources, moral and physical, wherever oppression menaces any.

The Civil War stimulated not only our moral sensibilities but our industrial power as well. It was the determining factor in two World Wars and now deters a looming Armageddon.

History attests that in time of tension even minor misunderstandings

between governments may lead to fatal encounters. To avoid them it is essential that all nations see one another clearly and understand one another thoroughly. It is our continuing and earnest endeavor to be known exactly for what we are, and what we would do in the world, and not mistaken for what we are not and would not do. If we succeed in this, we may succeed in all. If we fail in this, we shall surely fail in all.

We know we want nothing for ourselves except to share in the blessings of justice and a universal peace. Those who believe, or presume to believe otherwise, move all toward jeopardy.

How shall we prove ourselves to men of reason? How convince the doubtful that while we may not merit their full confidence we do not deserve their entire suspicion? How are we to show that our only, our ultimate objective is the common good?

Realistically I know that we cannot eliminate all jeopardy, but it will be minimized in direct ratio to an increasing reliance in our good faith. Good faith between people, whether they be allies or of diverse interests, starts with a point of common agreement. So far, despite the earnest efforts of dedicated men, it has not been found.

In 1960, the then great Member of Congress from this district, the Honorable Fred Schwengel, now President of the U. S. Capitol Historical Society, asked me to speak to the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia. In my address I suggested that since Abraham Lincoln was now accepted as a benign figure by all parties, he might be a common rallying point. I proposed supplementing our vast economic aid, which by itself seems to fall short of accomplishing its ends, with a simple idea. Why not add the Lincoln Plan to the Marshall Plan? Why not export Abraham Lincoln as part of our foreign aid and in our domestic interest?

I believe this is fundamentally sound -- for it is based on the axiom of identities. If we have high regard for Lincoln, as do others in that

respect at least, we must have equal regard for each other. Once this correspondence is established it is undoubted that others would be found. I do not think that a common admiration for Lincoln would be an end -- but it would be a beginning.

If two opposed statesmen, a Communist and an American, should discover that each admires Lincoln, their differences would be put aside as they discuss his qualities. The American, in discussing his magnificent letters, might quote from one he wrote an opposed Southerner after his election:

"On the territorial question I am inflexible . . . On that there is a difference between you and us; and it is the only substantial difference. You think slavery is right and ought to be extended; we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted. For this, neither has any just occasion to be angry with the other."

I am not so naive as to think the parallel of Lincoln's logical and urbane resolution of the complex issues of slavery would overcome the Communist. In this case Lincoln, himself, did not win over the Southerner. But the parallel might advance the acceptance of our current doctrine of the containment of Communism where it is legal and its restriction where it is not.

The theme of the Lincoln Plan was stated in an amalgam of his familiar words:

"All mankind and all nations shall conduct themselves with malice toward none and charity for all; with firmness in the right as their Gods give them to see the right; and strive to do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace."

I went on to say that any nation of wealth could build an Aswan Dam, but only we could export in unlimited supply the great good will, the common sense, the dedication to his fellow men, the superb sense of justice, the

quality of mercy and the universal understanding of Abraham Lincoln.

There was kind and gentle approval. The address was read into the Congressional Record and reprinted elsewhere. There has been no other result.

Undoubtedly the fault lay in myself and my presentation for men of substance assure me the plan has merit. Five years ago I spoke in generalities and with the diffidence of a layman in complex affairs. Today, though still with understandable diffidence, I shall try to be more particular and, hopefully, more convincing. It may be that others, indeed perhaps some of you here, with greater persuasiveness, and certainly greater powers, may be able to forward the plan if it be found worthy.

Although Abraham Lincoln is our universal ambassador it is clear that he does not represent us everywhere for, despite his free passage and welcome presence, all do not associate him with us. Some people took him into their hearts, but forgot that he, too, was an American, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. I would remind them of this. Because he is so towering a figure they forgot that he grew out of our people just as the mightiest tree in a forest is still a part of the general growth. It is not a different tree. Through the mysterious processes of nature it is only a greater tree. I would remind them of this. They forgot that the sheer existence of Lincoln among us, and our century of remembrance has shaped us as, in his time, he was shaped by the great Americans who preceded him. And I would remind them of this. Finally, I would remind ourselves that there are some who think we have deserted his principles and become a different people.

Recently I discovered a disturbing allusion to this in a little-known address of 1917 by none other than ex-President William Howard Taft:

"Lincoln to us and to the world means wisdom and opportunity. He means the triumph of the moral over the expedient. He means justice to the humble

and down-trodden. He does not suggest great commercial strides. The United States is the richest nation in the world today. Its growth, the development of its resources, its rapid and substantial expansion, are the wonder of economists. Yet Lincoln stands for nothing of this. No one thinks of national wealth when he is named. Why then is he the great American? Because he is the supreme sacrifice to virtue. He is the negation of what America too often stands for -- the commercial spirit and the worship of the dollar."

I have heard this accusation from foreigners, but rarely from an American. I have always rejected the assumption flatly. Admitting the commercial spirit exists in fortunate abundance, I have contended that it goes hand in hand with a tithing and a neutralizing spirit -- a dedication to the humanities. Though I still think so, Mr. Taft's sobering words suggest that we should survey ourselves, using Lincoln as a benchmark, to find and correct the faults in ourselves that might minimize the effectiveness, not only of Mr. Lincoln but of our other public servants.

I would not have you think the Lincoln Plan is for export only. It is for domestic consumption as well. Historians and biographers have spent the past hundred years in gathering the materials of his life and writing. If, as some think, the age of accumulation is over, the time for assimilation is here. There is much for all to learn from him for he is still known only in the barest outline.

The extent and detail of his history, the day-by-day chronicles of his life and his written and oral record is almost unparalleled. Despite this, only his cabin-birth, his opposition to slavery, the great debates, his affection for the common people, his Presidency, and his assassination come easily to mind for all too many of us. Because he was eloquent we have memorized shards from his addresses at Cooper Union, Gettysburg, the two Inaugurals and from his House Divided Speech.

Moving, memorable and magical though these fragments are, they only hint at the grandeur of the whole man and the long straight aisles and vaulted ceilings of the edifice of his thought. In the eight volumes of his Collected Works there are other words more meaningful to the present time and the solution of the problem that beset us.

From the Message to Congress in 1862:

"If ever there was a time for catch-phrases, that time is not now. In times like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and eternity."

How terrifying an invocation of nightmares past; how awesome a warning of future terrors lie in these few words. Unbridled tongues, like cutting swords, have deluged man in his own blood and human flesh has been roasted in fires kindled by a few catch-phrases.

In the past fifty years alone a handful of catch-phrases uttered thoughtlessly by fools or, with calculation, by the cunning have sent them to dishonored death and, pitiably, tens of millions died with them.

Had the innocent millions known of, and believed in, Lincoln's respect for them they might have found the courage, the will and the means to deny power and control to dictators and lived on in peace instead of dying in the requiem echoes of their shrill and rabid words.

There could be no mightier bulwark against tyrants than this glorious apostrophe to mankind that Lincoln voiced during his first Inaugural Address:

"Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any equal or greater hope in the world?"

It deserves to be chiseled in stone in the halls of all governments as antiphony to another immortal declaration - "Governments are instituted among men and derive their just powers from the consent of the governed".

Wars might never come again if all the governing considered the governed

to be their peers and not their slaves; if all should "utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and eternity". That would mark the end of inflammatory slogans and the steaming compost of lies, half-truths, rumors, innuendoes and the obliquities in which madness germinates and wars are hatched.

Should any protest that affairs of state could not be conducted under such circumstances they will find contrary proof in the history and words of Lincoln. Though he was a consummate statesman he can stand responsible for any word he ever uttered -- through time and eternity. He always told the truth. He was never intemperate. He did not exacerbate the feelings of opponents. Even under severe provocation he did not answer heat with heat, nor, even in the midst of war, depict the enemy as villains. He relied on reason and not on catch-phrases.

I would export these quotations and others for they could be added to at length. David C. Mearns, that most sensitive of Lincoln scholars, has termed him "the most quotable notable". But quotations are neither the man nor the plan.

First, in all practicality, the costs should be considered. Whether borne by the government, as I think they should be, or by a great foundation or raised by public subscription, they would be insignificant compared to the inherent benefits. They would be far less than the one day cost of stamping out a brush fire.

Second -- a separate organization would not be needed. We already have the brains, the manpower, the machinery and the pipelines of distribution. All we have to do is to adopt the plan and start the printing presses. For whatever refinements may be added after greater thought -- the core of the plan is in the mind of the man and the facts about him -- and they are in the books.

I would place a set of the Collected Works in every library of every country that would allow their entry. With them I would send the one volume "Lives of Lincoln" by Sandburg and Thomas; "Lincoln for the Ages", which has been called the poor man's Lincoln library; Roy Basler's edition of Lincoln's Speeches and Writings; "The Lincoln Reader" of Paul Anglo; "The Living Lincoln" by Anglo and Miers and "Lincoln Day by Day", the three volume chronicle of his life. The Collected Works have been available from the History Book Club as a bonus for around \$7. If sold to the Plan for around \$10 each, 10,000 sets could be delivered for \$100,000. Most of the other books are available in paper back editions -- or could be so printed. Assuming a cost of 50 cents apiece, 10,000 sets of these important books could be furnished for an additional \$50,000.

I would do all that was possible to have these books translated into the languages of the countries receiving them -- even to the point of furnishing financial grants to the translators and, on some refundable basis, making loans to assist the publishers where that was necessary. Most certainly I would try to stimulate the writing of new lives of Lincoln in those countries that did not already have a satisfactory one.

A few years ago I discussed this plan, in embryo, with the distinguished Senor Carillo-Flores, Ambassador from Mexico to the United States. He is a devoted student of the life and works of Lincoln and a great friend of this country. We agreed that a book paralleling the lives of Juarez and Lincoln should be written in Spanish for distribution in Mexico and perhaps other Latin-American countries. He stressed that it was highly needed. He regretted the lack of material about Lincoln in Spanish and told me, ruefully, how many low-priced books about the great Communist leaders were on sale everywhere -- well printed, and, significantly, all published in Spanish and aimed at all ages.

I once heard Carl Sandburg make a wry remark that bears on this. "The Communists", he said, "have not outfought us. They have just out-thought us".

A new book on Lincoln's humor should be added to the others I have mentioned. Perhaps Mort R. Lewis, who is deeply versed in Lincoln's use of humor to make his points, would be willing to edit it. Such a collection would do much to humanize the man for whom all have such reverence.

My outline could be amplified by other similar and related ideas involving all the known means of communication if time and your patience allowed. But this is unnecessary before this audience in a concept so simple and so obvious in its ways of execution.

Since the basic plan could be put into operation for about \$150,000, a total of \$500,000 should carry it far enough to start the inevitable chain reaction. After its benefits were apparent, many nations should be willing to make the minor contributions needed to make it self-sustaining.

Whether the pedestrian simplicities I suggest are adopted or we raise lilacs in the spring and send their sprigs abroad in amber -- as unfading symbols of our devotion to one the world loves -- some good will surely follow. Whether the plan is acclaimed by the Congress and the United Nations or by one member of this graduating class -- the results will differ only in time and degree. One set of Lincoln's works put into the right person's hands would, in time, change an event; many sets put into many hands would change the course of many events and do it rapidly.

In the midst of his war, Mr. Lincoln presented a plea to the Congress for support of his simple plan to shorten it -- compensated emancipation of the slaves.

In the midst of this war, I can think of no argument more powerful in support of this plan than he used in support of his.

"Is it doubted, then, that the plan I propose, if adopted, would shorten the war, and lessen its expenditure of money and of blood? . . Will not the

good people respond to a united and earnest appeal from us? Can we, can they, by any other means so certainly or so speedily assure those vital objects? We can succeed only by concert. It is not "can any of us imagine better?" but "can we all do better?" Object whatsoever is possible, still the question recurs "can we do better?"

Surely there can be no doubt that, if adopted, the plan "would shorten the war" and, since we are doing everything else, and doing it well -- what else is there that "we can do better"?

Though benefits would be immense if the plan did succeed, paradoxically, it could not fail. If it did not accomplish its primary purpose, it would still serve greatly. It would be the first tribute to Lincoln in our second century of remembrance. It would stand as a mighty contribution to the better understanding of our country -- for Lincoln lived and worked in the veritable waist of the hour-glass of our history. The years of the American story spread out equally on either side of him.

He knew soldiers of the Revolution and men who served under him also served this century well. He is the great connective tissue of our national fabric. He was born almost midway between 1965 and 1643. In that year the settlers, clinging like limpets to their narrow shore line, first confederated as the United Colonies of New England. That was the seedbed of the Republic.

There is no mightier bulwark against enslavement than democracy. It is the last best hope of earth. With the help of all who believe this -- Lincoln can be heard anew. He can speak out for democracy again, not in English alone, but in all the tongues of earth and from myriad lips -- for the perpetuation of its blessings through interminable tomorrows.

